

REMARKS

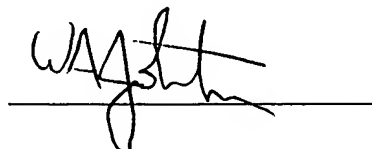
Entry of the foregoing Preliminary Amendment prior to examination of this application is respectfully requested.

A new paragraph regarding the claimed foreign priority of the present application has been added to the beginning of the specification. Subtitles similar to those set forth in 37 C.F.R. 1.77 have been added throughout the specification. Claims 1-14 have been amended to better define the invention. Claim 15 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 16-18 have been added. As a result, claims 1-14 and 16-18 are now pending.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the invention of claim 1 is patentable. Further, the subject matter of the remaining dependent claims is patentable at least by virtue of direct or indirect dependence on claim 1. Therefore, it is believed that all pending claims of this application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a prompt Notice of Allowance for all pending claims of this application is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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